

future news

A newsletter for
members of the
Futures
Foundation



Transforming Lives in Cambodia An alternative future for "Schoolies Week"

A Cambodian village in Takeo Province and the capital city Phnom Penh will never be the same again after a high school teacher in Victoria helped his students to reinvent "schoolies week".

Instead of the vigorous partying that marks the end of school for many young Australians, this group of students spent two weeks in Cambodia helping to build eight houses for disadvantaged families and assisting with English classes at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

David Dickson, who teaches at Kerang Technical High School in Victoria, wanted students to create a new way to celebrate their transition out of school. With the help of the Bank of I.D.E.A.S., the local Kerang Rotary Club and the people of the town – itself struggling with drought for the past ten years – the students went to Cambodia to spend their "schoolies week" in a more meaningful way.

"It is important that students are prepared for the cultural differences they will experience," said Rotarian Sharon Champion from the Rotary Club of Kerang and chairman of the Schoolies Alternative (SAlt) Project. "It is just as important to consider the ways of the local people and that is why we are working with a Cambodian NGO that understands what the Cambodians want, for example the design of the houses. We do not want to impose our views on them. The project supplied the finances and we used local suppliers for materials and services."

"To say we achieved our goals would be an understatement," continued Sharon. "We achieved them plus more...if that is possible. We were all stunned, as leaders, by the developments/changes we observed in our students over the short period of two weeks. They were challenged beyond belief and dealt with it amazingly. Almost everything they knew and held dear was challenged. They were faced with extreme poverty, beggars, homeless people, pollution, lack of road rules, corruption and often-unsanitary conditions. They took up the challenges and interacted with the Khmer people in a way that was exhilarating. They played "Duck, Duck, Goose" with children in a small village after building houses for a day and danced unashamedly with homeless children in the street. Despite their own emotions, they smiled and laughed with those around them. If it sounds like I'm proud, that's because I am.... extremely proud of the whole team. Will we do it again? Definitely. Will we attempt to change much? Probably not, but we will extend on and refine a few things."

The 2007 team was the first team to go and they are now planning for the event to be an annual event. In this way it will provide the experience to as many school leavers as possible over the coming years. They are hoping that other Rotary Clubs may form similar partnerships with their local secondary schools and use the Kerang model as an alternative schoolies program.

"As a small, rural community under drought conditions, we must undertake large efforts at fundraising to support such a worthwhile project. We are therefore seeking any financial contributions towards maintaining this project and we would love to have a major contributor," explains Sharon.

For further details, contact Sharon Champion of the Rotary Club of Kerang on 0417058663 or email schampion@westnet.com.au

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Helping with English classes in Phnom Penh



Building houses in Takeo Province



The living way we are

In the Southern Hemisphere autumn comes during the months of March to May and it so happens that in the middle of autumn of this year, 19 - 20 April, Australia will hold the *Australia 2020 Summit*. The intention of this event is to bring together a thousand people to work on best ideas of ten main challenges facing the nation.

We know that everywhere across the world autumn is also the time to prepare the soil and plant the seeds in readiness for the new harvesting cycle to come. Similarly, according to Jorge Ferrer, Marina Romero, and Ramon Albareda⁽¹⁾, in the human integral creative cycle it is important in autumn to study what is already known by understanding that the body contains meaningful knowledge which cannot be reached by the deliberating mind. Autumn is thus a time that involves preparing the physical body by releasing accumulated tensions and to take actions that cultivate an attitude of receptivity as if one were planting seeds in one's inner soil. Autumn is a time "for the mind to let go of old ways of thinking so that it can support and recognize the novel fruits of the new creative cycle" that will follow.

From another perspective, and based on her 33 years of field practice-based inquiry, Yoland Wadworth⁽²⁾ offers us a way to think about the living fabric of complex human systems. She writes: "Many of us around the world are currently seeking a new way of thinking about who we are and how better to make sense of the world in order to more urgently attempt to address some dismaying tendencies that seem recurrent in many human populations." (p. 15)

Yoland assembles three cyclic sequences of:

- living systems – corresponding to the cycle of bringing-to-life through to breakdown,
- knowledge seeking – corresponding to the cycle of observation through to monitoring, and
- embodiment diversity of human personality – corresponding to the cycle of sensing-feeling preferred mental processes through to sensing-thinking.

The three cyclic sequences contain two phase changes at the points where the most difficult processes of change occur. The first phase change occurs in moving from 'how things are or have been' to 'how things could instead be'. The second phase change happens when going from 'how things could be' to 'how these new things now are the way things are'. The first defends the existing system against registering the possibility that something is problematic or needs attention by denial. The second defends the existing system against the newly-researched solution by treating it as 'foreign'.

Combining the autumnal advice of receptivity and openness of the integral creative cycle with the living systems, knowledge seeking, and personality cycles it seems that the timing of the *Australia 2020 Summit* could be used to advantage by those participating. In so doing summit participants would be open to undergoing a difficult phase change from 'what is' to 'what could be'. As Yoland notes: "Living systems theory may better assist us understand ourselves and each other in new ways that equip us to move less ponderously towards the conditions *for* life, and away from systemic danger. Assist us be less quick to reject each other's new ideas or ways of being; and might assist us hear each other's contributions a little more respectfully, and advance the making of individually and collectively wiser responses." (p. 27, emphasis added)

What if this summit is the start of what in the future will be known as the North-South seasonal social-innovation oscillation?

Barbara Bok

- (1) Ferrer, Jorge N, Romero, Marina T, & Albareda, Ramon V 2007, 'The integral creative cycle', *Kosmos*, Fall/Winter, Viewed 14 March 2008, at www.kosmosjournal.org.
 (2) Wadsworth, Yoland 2008, 'Systemic human relations in dynamic equilibrium', *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, Vol. 21, pp. 15-34

NEW BOOK ON Futures Research

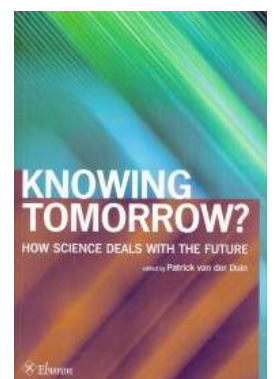
Knowing tomorrow? How science deals with the future

Edited by Patrick van der Duin

Published by Eburon Academic Publishers, Delft, 2007, 224 pages, €29.00

"In *Knowing Tomorrow*, well known futures researchers from around the world (e.g., Italy, the U.K., the U.S.A., the Netherlands, Taiwan, and Australia) discuss how the future is being dealt with in different sciences. They describe how scientists have incorporated the future in their theories, thereby often taking a historical perspective. The findings of this book can offer strong support to the scientific foundations of futures research and thus improve futures research as a scientific discipline.

The increasing importance of futures research makes it both interesting and necessary to look at its scientific foundations. Since futures research is interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary, this book looks at how the concept of the future (or futures) is being addressed in various scientific disciplines, such as psychology, philosophy, economics, geography, and astronomy."



Future News is published

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for its members.

Its purpose is to connect,
to inform and to inspire.

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Activism and Advocacy Engagement

There are always far more people who say they support or say they are sympathetic to a particular cause for social change than there are people who are willing to actually take the action required to bring about that change.

“Why do some people in some situations take action for the social good, or choose to advocate on behalf of others? And, in a practical sense, how does one persuade or motivate people to act?”, asks Emma Partridge, a research principal at the Institute for Sustainable Futures. “These questions present key dilemmas and challenges for social movement theorists, campaigners, activists, advocacy organisations, charities, and many ‘good cause’ groups.”

These are questions that keenly interest The Cancer Council NSW (TCCN) and that is why they engaged the Institute for Sustainable Futures to conduct a research project so as to inform TCCN’s own strategies to engage members of the public in activism and advocacy roles associated with cancer control.

“This was a challenging project,” reports Emma, who undertook the research. “[I]t had a particular focus on two main areas of interest to TCCN, namely: (i) Factors that lead to effective engagement and activism; and (ii) Benchmarking, performance measures or indicators used by other organisations/movements to measure and evaluate the success of their activism and advocacy strategies.”

Some of the specific questions that the research attempted to answer included describing the barriers and challenges faced by those seeking to

increase levels of activism, and reviewing the strategies for exactly how organisations sustain or increase people’s commitment to activism.

Emma’s research report reveals a number of conclusions and areas of focus such as:

- “Strategies should target those people who are predisposed to change.... It is important therefore, not to rely on ‘one-size-fits-all strategies...’”
- “Change is social.... Providing opportunities for people to connect, communicate and build relationships with other people is key to ensuring that their involvement is socially rewarding and hence likely to be sustained over time.”
- “Organisations need to clearly identify and promote the benefits of participation.”

“The project consisted of a review of relevant literature and a series of research interviews with representatives of other non-profit activist or advocacy organisations. The scope of the research covered the wide range of attempts by various organisations to involve members of the public in activism and advocacy of any kind. It included e-activism as well as face-to face activism.”

- (1) Partridge, Emma, (2007), Strategies to engage people in activism and advocacy: research report, prepared for the Cancer Council (NSW), by the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology, Sydney.

Two Wins for A Better Future

The organisers of the AusForesight2007 Festival day at Victoria Park in Sydney, Janine Cahill and Elizabeth Cahill, are once again creating two more opportunities in 2008 for the public and young people to engage in futures thinking.

LiveFutures 2020

“This is a sustainable-future-focused festival that will celebrate the possibilities that science, technology and innovation enable for the future,” explains Janine. “We will introduce people to the science and technologies and the impacts on our lives and give an opportunity to reflect and express. We are engaging scientists, futurists, environmentalists, science communicators, architects, artists, designers, entrepreneurs, with young people on the future.”

Live Futures 2020: Science Technology and Innovation moving us forward is happening on Sunday 24 August 2008 in Sydney with simultaneous online connections as well.

“In addition to the must-have festival spaces (see the table in the next column), we would again like to have a working space with the ministry for peace and an ICT barcamp space like we had last year provided there are enough people to run with it,” says Janine.

“Getting involved will help you and the futurist community. The more people talking about it the better. Let’s impact government, the public, small and large corporates, NGOs, social entrepreneurs and put the future on everyone’s lips. If you have some great ideas for collaborations or if you know anyone working in these fields please sign up. We need ideas and contacts for at least these spaces. We have positions available for an event management intern and a digital media intern. And we are looking for sponsors of prizes like a rock concert, a night out, a digi camera, blackberry, baby mac, an Xbox, Wii, PS3, even a PS2...”

Contact Janine@futurejourneys.com



FESTIVAL SPACES

- * Nanotechnology
- * Biotechnology
- * Health
- * Food
- * Cool stuff
- * Robotics & Artificial Intelligence
- * Environment
- * Ethics and Transparency
- * Redesign and Retrofitting: fashion, cities, houses, units, parks: the whole REUSE philosophy



Young Australians sponsored

“Fabulous young people from all over Australia could have their travel expenses covered in order to meet with others who want to create better futures for Australia and the world,” explains Liz.

“We are arranging a scenario-building weekend Futures Dreaming on the weekend 14-15 June 2008 at the Pittwater Youth Hostel in Sydney,” continues Liz. “And we are looking for young people who would like to contribute to this weekend. We would like to get the message out to enough young people.”

Contact liz@futurejourneys.com

Global Youth Futures Festivals Inc (a non-profit association) received \$12,000 Science Week funding from minister for Science, Technology, Industry and Research to create a sustainable-future-focused festival. Elizabeth Cahill of Global Youth Futures has secured funding for travel expenses for youth attending the Futures Dreaming weekend.



Comparing Technology Predictions

NEXT 5 IN 5

For the second year IBM has produced a prediction of the next five innovations that will change the way we live, work, and play in the next five years. They based their selections on research lab projects, business think tank ideas, and ideas from their employees around the world. The five innovations are:

DOCTORS WITH SUPER POWERS

Doctors will have access to a 3-D representation or avatar with data about to your body.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Your food will have a digital passport with detailed information that could be read by smart shopping trolleys or your refrigerator.

GOING GREEN

A new range of “smart energy” technology will monitor and report your energy usage and allow you to manage your own carbon footprint.

COMMUTING YOUR COMMUTE

Intelligent traffic, vehicle, and transport systems technology will allow you to choose best routes, avoid congestion, and travel faster.

YOUR CELL PHONE, YOURSELF

Your mobile phone will connect you to a wide range of services.

More information at

www.ibm.com/ibm/ideasfromibm/us/five_in_five/12312007/index.shtml

10 EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES 2008

The ten emerging technologies that *Technology Review* thinks are most likely to change the way we live are:

MODELING SURPRISE

Combining data mining and machine learning will help people to better anticipate and cope with unusual events.

NANORADIO

At the core of the nanoradio is a single molecule that can receive radio signals and so allow researchers to fabricate very small devices.

GRAPHENE TRANSISTORS

A new form of carbon material is one atom thick and could give transistors ultrahigh-speed communications properties.

WIRELESS POWER

Wireless power technology transmits electricity to low-power devices without the use of cables and might eventually eliminate batteries.

REALITY MINING

The information collected by mobile-phone sensors can be used to learn about human behaviour.

ATOMIC MAGNETOMETERS

Tiny, inexpensive magnetometers sensitive to very weak magnetic fields could lead to portable MRI machine and other detection tools.

OFFLINE WEB APPLICATIONS

Applications developed using Web technologies can combine the resources of a user's computer as well as those of the Internet.

PROBABILISTIC CHIPS

A microchip design technology that could significantly increase battery life in mobile devices.

CONNECTOMICS

Mapping all synaptic connections between neurons should lead to better understanding of brain development and disease.

CELLULOLYTIC ENZYMES

Better enzymes are being designed for making biofuels from cellulose.

More information at www.technologyreview.com/specialreports/specialreport.aspx?id=25

Futures in Cyberspace

An Eco Tour of *Second Life*

The Foresight and Governance Project at The Woodrow Wilson Centre has been exploring how virtual worlds can be used to solve real world environmental problems. As part of the larger project to explore how computer and video game technologies can be applied to environmental issues, they made a movie of initiatives in *Second Life* (SL) that uses SL for environmental and governance oriented purposes. Some entities are partnerships between SL entities and real life (RL) entities. For example the Second Chance Trees initiative in SL is a partnership between the RL entities Converseon and Plant-It 2020 that will plant real endangered trees in real rainforests when you plant a tree on the SL island. To take the tour, without having to visit *Second Life*, go to

www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1414&fuseaction=topics.item&news_id=393493

Nano Tomorrows – Eight Molecular Manufacturing Scenarios

The Center for Responsible Nanotechnology focussed on “the engineering of functional systems at the molecular scale”, a specific advanced form of nanotechnology, to produce eight very different scenarios to the year 2022. Few doubt that these kinds of development will have affects across many different domains, from transportation to how we do business. Further, it is not inconceivable that these technologies will arrive in fifteen year's time but precisely how they will appear is still uncertain. The possibly disruptive impacts of molecular manufacturing technology should be taken seriously and prompt and thorough investigations of both benefits and risks should be taken. The eight scenarios are:

Scenario 1: Secret Military Development

Scenario 2: Positive Expectations

Scenario 3: Negative Drivers

Scenario 4: Presidential Commission

Scenario 5: ... And Not a Drop to Drink

Scenario 6: A Goal Postponed

Scenario 7: Newshound Notebook

Scenario 8: Breaking the Fever

For more details visit www.crnano.org:80/CTF-Scenarios.htm

community news

A service available to *Futures Foundation* members only

Available from the Melbourne Office

Future Survey

The December 2007 edition reviews recent articles and other publications in the areas of security, development, education, and learning and Work.

The January 2008 edition reviews recent publications in the fields of world futures, environment/resources, government, and crime and justice.

Economic Reform Australia newsletter

In addition to a number of articles about climate change and energy alternatives, the March/April 2008 edition of the newsletter contains a fascinating article by a Researcher in the Centre for Research on Globalisation entitled 'The Mediterranean Union, Dividing the Middle East and North Africa'.

Integral Naked DVD series

The October 2007 edition in the series contains a discussion between Sally Kempton and Ken Wilber about 'Bringing Greater Consciousness to Religion', an interview with Joe Perez and Ken Wilber about being 'Soulfully Gay - out of the closet with an integral embrace', and a presentation by Barrett Brown looking at 'Teal, Turquoise and Unitive Consciousness'.

The November 2007 edition contains the second part of the interview with Joe Perez and Ken Wilber on being Soulfully Gay and four presentations made by Ken Wilber at various recent conferences exploring issues such as 'Guru Yoga meets Modern Times' and 'Pharmaceuticals and the Spiritual Path'.

The December 2007 edition contains the first part of a discussion between James Turner and Ken Wilber entitled 'The Integral-Political Imperative' and a discussion between Ken Wilber and Tim Black on indigenous cultures in the modern world.

Futures journal

Volume 1 of the 2008 edition contains an essay entitled 'Asleep at the wheel - the World Future Society at 40' by Richard Slaughter, and articles entitled 'Mental Time Travel - A practical business and personal research tool for looking ahead', 'Corporate foresight in emerging markets - action research in a multinational company in Turkey', 'Energy Scenarios - Towards a new energy paradigm', 'Participative Backcasting - A tool for involving stakeholders in local sustainability planning'.

KLD Global Climate 100 Index

The GENI (Global Energy Network Alliance) has collaborated in the preparation of the KLD Global Climate 100 Index. An overview of the index is available.

The Futurist

The November/December edition of the magazine leads with 70 forecasts for 2008 and beyond, and asks 'Whither Western Civilisation', explores 'Thinking Globally, Acting Locally and Living Personally', and provides some scenarios on predicting panic in societies.

Integral Spiritual Center

New interviews on ISC in February between Ken Wilber and John Kesler 'You have to say something', and Father Thomas Keating 'In secret'.

Available on Request by Return Email

APF Compass

The February 2008 edition contains a segment on professional development, a book review and two book releases, information about upcoming futures conferences, and a new segment profiling members in the APF community.

Futurist Update

The February 2008 edition contains articles on bionic eyes, cosmic collision, and preventable deaths.

The March 2008 edition contains articles on recession-proof industries, infertility, Engineering's Grand Challenges, and goal-driven toddlers.